

# **Reisterstown Main Street Kick-Off Meeting Minutes March 7, 2013**

**Location/Date:** Trinity Lutheran Church, Reisterstown - March 7, 2013

**Attendees:** Amy Mantay, Kevin Kamenetz, Vicki Almond, Todd Huff, Amy Seitz, Andrea VanArsdale, Donnell Zeigler, Jennifer Meacham, Glenn Barnes, Colleen Brady, Mary Molinaro, Paul Davolos, Calvin Reter, Irwin Kramer, Dan Carey, Captain McElwee, Tony Baysmore, Marcie Goodman, Jonathan Schwartz, Kathy Gambrill, Jimmy Roberts, Ernie Schmidhauser, Kinsey Gill, Dave Powers, Shirley Smith, Lorena DeLeon, Alice Reid, Maggie Herman, Tina Johansson, Michelle Sholund, Carin Smith, Eleanor Bollinger, Pastor Glaman Kapfumvuti, Michael Reiner, Linda Percy, Rob Johnson, Benjamin Zonis, Mike & Tanya Sheffer, Mike Hofmeister, Carrie Gorham, Sam Schnitzer, Charlie Hoppa, Brad Knatz, Steven D. Michael, Sharon McKoy, JT Doer, Warren Rothouse, Carole Pritchett, Carolyn D. Workman, Becky Stansfield Larkins, Abigail Cooley, Lisa Dibbern, Gary Lenz, Jennifer DeMoss, Ted Schultz, Richard Stem Jr., William Latimer, Bill Stem, Alan Soskin, Jennifer Biddinger, Bob Frank, Sharon Baldwin, Bob Maimone, Melissa Sweeney, Mary Jo Kobosko, Jacob deNobel, Troy C. Richardson, Carol & Carroll Parker, Bob Reynolds, Chris Culotta, Cassandra Wallace, Dr. Peter Ferra, Zach Odani, Sharon Shipe, Gerald L. Robins, Sally Vackon, Hailey Moore, Brenda Suskin, Charles Smith, Ronald Walpert, Dr. Jim Eickhoff, Jane Eickhoff, M. Linda Cavanagh, Sallie Miller, Marc Shapiro, Reverend Tim Feaser

Calvin opened the meeting thanking everyone for coming and said that since last November a group of people started meeting on Monday mornings at Reters Crabhouse at 10am to work on making Main Street a destination and place to shop. He said this also included the combined efforts of the Reisterstown Improvement Association, ROG Coordinating Council and ROMG Chamber of Commerce. He talked about some of the businesses that were on Main Street when he was young (bars, shops, restaurants, gas stations, banks and bakeries). He then introduced the next speaker, County Executive Kevin Kamenetz.

Kevin thanked Pastor Feaser for hosting tonight's meeting. He also thanked Captain McElwee for working with the community and recognized Abbey Cooley, the Reisterstown librarian and Jane Eickhoff who was a former librarian in Reisterstown. He gave a little history explaining that in 2009 when he was on the County Council a resolution was passed to assist Reisterstown with the renovations efforts which prompted a 2 day pre-charette workshop. When he was elected and reorganized his offices, he directed the Department of Planning to assign Amy Mantay as our part-time Main Street manager for the next two years and work with us to complete the steps to apply for the Main Street Maryland program. He said that Main Street is an important center for the town. It's important to create more businesses and opportunities. This evening is a great brainstorming opportunity for community members and business owners. Kevin introduced the two council members who were present.

Vicki Almond thanked everyone for coming and encouraged everyone to become excited about the work to improve Reisterstown. She has worked for years (a former ROG Coordinating Council President) with the community on various efforts and events. Todd Huff said he remembered before his election the work at the visionary workshop and is excited to see that work continue today. He said many times

work is started, stopped and never restarted and is happy to see our effort get underway. We want our town to be an exciting place to “eat, work and play.”

Amy Mantay from the Planning Department who is acting as our temporary Main Street Manager was introduced and she started our evening’s activities by saying how excited she is to work on our town. Her background is in Main Street development and started in North Carolina several years ago. She said this is just the beginning of our project – not the end.

She introduced Amy Seitz who is in charge of the Main Street Maryland program to which we hope to apply. Amy had a power point presentation where she reviewed the highlights of the program and towns where it has been successful. She said that with our committees we want to:

Do Good Work

Make a Positive Impact on the Community

Collaborate with all groups working on the project

Have Fun

She also said that fundraising is important; there isn’t any funding from the state for our efforts. She said that successful programs get 1/3 of the funding from private sources, 1/3 of the funding from the local government, and 1/3 of the funding from grants and other funding sources. She is very happy to see the strong support from Baltimore County Government for our efforts. It’s important to hold consensus building meetings. The program started in 1998 in Maryland and there are currently 26 places accepted. The program is closely tied to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and we need to look for “community character” and “good quality of life.” There was a handout describing the four committees defined in the program, Organization (managing the district, capacity, resources, how to run, who will administer it), Promotion (events, promotion, branding, don’t make events one and done, design it so people will want to come back), Design (enhancing the environment, buildings, streetscape planning and signage), Economic Restructuring (a new niche & purpose, market analysis, real estate development, business retention & expansion – can help with vacant properties and encourage “pop-up” business to fill them temporarily which may grow to permanent if they are successful). Maryland added a Clean, Safe and Green committee (sustainable communities, smart growth strategies, crime control and prevention through environmental design, utilizing state resources).

Amy discussed the Revitalization Tool Box

Community Legacy (examples like the Belair Armory being rehabbed – in Cumberland 2<sup>nd</sup> floors were renovated to apartments to bring people to the street and then services stayed open to service the residents – Denton Main Street Lily pad Café – Cambridge “A few of my favorite things”)

Neighborhood Business Works (small business loan programs)

Community Development Block Grant

Across the existing 26 Main Streets in the program last year there was \$9.5M in public and private investments and 275 projects. In 2012, there were 174 New Businesses, 740 New Jobs, and 47,000 Volunteer Hours. The Main Street Manager is paid to organize everything for the town. Take a look at the website [www.neighborhoodrevitalization.org](http://www.neighborhoodrevitalization.org)

Questions from the audience included:

1. Has she been successful with getting public parking lots in any other of the 26 communities as that is a big problem in our area? We have some street parking but with the speed of the traffic, that can be an issue. Amy said that Bel Air had similar concerns and did put marked parking spaces on their Main Street.
2. How is she paid? Amy said that she is part of the Maryland Department of Housing and Communities. She doesn't have a line item in the state budget. However, she does have some discretionary funds for meetings she plans and consultants she may hire to come assist a community.

Amy Mantay took back the program, thanked Amy Seitz and continued with her agenda. She explained to everyone that we have been meeting since last November to start organizing with a group of interested stakeholders and are still looking for many more volunteers to work on the five committees. She said that we have been working with the mantra "fake it 'til you make it" getting organized so we will be ready to apply for the Main Street Maryland program when they next open the application process. Amy brought everyone's attention to the listed county programs that can assist business owners in the Commercial Revitalization District. She then introduced the chairpeople of each committee:

**Design:** Irwin Kramer – spoke about how he came to town three years ago and bought the Ebaugh house which is at the southernmost part of the area we are focusing. Rather than tearing down the building, he had a great respect for the history of it, the entire area, and rehabilitated it with that focus.

**Promotion:** Calvin Reter – spoke about planning activities that will bring people to our town.

**Organization:** Mary Molinaro – spoke about assisting with organizing the outreach effort to all the stakeholders and working on completing lists, helping with the walkability survey and now looking to the fundraising needs as described by Amy Seitz.

**Economic Restructuring:** Paul Davolos – spoke about efforts to retain current businesses, bring new businesses and assisting with money needs to help business owners to get financing.

**Clean, Safe & Green:** Dan Carey – thanked the committee member who have attended each week just prior to the regular meetings discussing working with the police to make Main Street safe.

Amy discussed the projects underway including:

1. The website address is [www.baltimorecountymd.gov/go/reisterstown](http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/go/reisterstown) and she explained that you can find all the minutes from the meetings as well as an interactive map of the area identifying businesses. They are working to add more information as well such as the business website and history of the building.
2. Morning meeting with business owners (2-26-13) and ideas/concerns that were an outcome.

#### DESIGN

Greater accessibility

Improve walkability, slow traffic, safer crosswalks

Encourage curb appeal along Main Street

#### PROMOTION

Promote history of area

Look for any untapped market (the nearby regional park, Stevenson University, etc.)

Partner with local schools to incorporate Reisterstown's history and Main Street in the curriculum (field trips to Main Street, walking tours)

#### ORGANIZATION

- Better networking among merchants
- Regular, consistent store hours for all businesses
- Businesses stay open one night a week until 7pm
- Build partnerships with local organizations

#### ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

- Develop a business mentoring program/toolkit for new businesses
- Access to large customers such as the State or County who will contract with restaurants during storms/other events
- Work with local schools to use students as part-time help to business owners

#### CLEAN, SAFE, & GREEN

- Improve security
- Encourage better property management

Now we want to hear from you – Amy explained that the last part of the evening’s events will be “table talk discussion” where each person moves to one of ten tables where a map of the area is placed, with the help of one of the committee people acting as a facilitator mark the location of their business or property and discuss our interest/concerns. A spokesperson from each group will give a report to the entire group.

#### Ideas presented by the spokespeople:

- Parking problems need to be resolved
- Currently somewhat walkable but needs to be improved
- Promote the history – seen by some as a “village”
- Picture for a postcard may need to be a vista showing several rather than just one spot
- Need more places to go open in the evening, pubs, wine bar, restaurant
- Need pocket parks – or – passive parks where people can stop and rest when walking
- Property next to Harryman House up for auction would be a perfect place for Visitor Center, Park, Public Restrooms, etc.
- Lines on Main Street to indicate where you can park
- Green Space
- Farmers Market
- Pedestrian Walkway
- Town Clock that can be seen on the street
- Directory of Events and Businesses
- Better lining showing crosswalks and car stops below The Cow for example
- Gathering Area
- Make a Center of Town feel as we are so linear
- Emphasize historic district
- Postcard could be a shot including Ski Shop – Cemetery – Library
- Parking resolve
- More restaurants along Main Street – issue that within 300 ft of schools or churches you can’t serve liquor
- Playground

Visitor Center to display history of town – currently in Reisterstown Room of the library but not enough room to actually display everything

Old Movie House

More good quality stores and monitor signage

Community tree lighting

Improve exterior so they are inviting

Parking – Tina's Antiques offered hers without towing as did Java Mamma's

Lighting – brighter and friendlier

Improve cleanliness

Fixing septic and plumbing @ Haley's

Bringing in more businesses

Billboards up 140 promote Westminster, we could have a few for our town

Business Security --- start Merchants on Patrol, now a police officer assigned to do a walking tour during the day so Merchants can keep their eyes and ears open in the evening.

Soon, officers will be doing bicycle tours of Main Street

Clean

Greenery – fill flower boxes

Better lighting

Awareness of businesses for Baltimore County iWatch program

Mass email alert from business to business to advise everyone when something happens

Calvin spoke about the fact that money from parking meters that were installed years ago and later removed never was returned to use in the community as promised. He also mentioned that he'd like to see the Reisterstown Festival returned to the Middle School grounds.

Vicki Almond thanked Amy Mantay for all the work she has done so far in the project.

Jimmy Roberts donated 2 tickets to the Maryland Home and Garden Show being held at the Timonium Fairgrounds this weekend as a door prize and Becky Larkins won.

The next meeting will be held at Reter's Crabhouse, Monday, March 11 , 2013 at 10am.